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Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 59/121 of 10 December 2004, the operative part of which reads as follows:

> "*The General Assembly*,
>
> "...
>
> "1. *Commends* the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly and for its impartiality;
>
> "2. *Reiterates its demand* that Israel, the occupying Power, cooperate with the Special Committee in implementing its mandate;
>
> "3. *Deplores* those policies and practices of Israel that violate the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories, as reflected in the report of the Special Committee covering the reporting period;
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> "4. *Expresses grave concern* about the continuing crisis situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000, as a result of unlawful Israeli practices and measures, and especially condemns the excessive and indiscriminate use of force against the civilian population, including extrajudicial executions, which has resulted in more than 3,400 Palestinian deaths, including those of more than 750 children, and tens of thousands of injuries;

* A/60/150.

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"5. *Requests* the Special Committee, pending complete termination of the Israeli occupation, to continue to investigate Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, especially Israeli violations of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to consult, as appropriate, with the International Committee of the Red Cross according to its regulations in order to ensure that the welfare and human rights of the peoples of the occupied territories are safeguarded and to report to the Secretary-General as soon as possible and whenever the need arises thereafter;

"6. *Also requests* the Special Committee to submit regularly to the Secretary-General periodic reports on the current situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

"7. *Further requests* the Special Committee to continue to investigate the treatment of prisoners and detainees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967;

"8. *Requests* the Secretary-General:

"(*a*) To provide the Special Committee with all necessary facilities, including those required for its visits to the occupied territories, so that it may investigate Israeli policies and practices referred to in the present resolution;

"(*b*) To continue to make available such additional staff as may be necessary to assist the Special Committee in the performance of its tasks;

"(*c*) To circulate regularly to Member States the periodic reports mentioned in paragraph 6 above;

"(*d*) To ensure the widest circulation of the reports of the Special Committee and of information regarding its activities and findings, by all means available, through the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat and, where necessary, to reprint those reports of the Special Committee that are no longer available;

"(*e*) To report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the tasks entrusted to him in the present resolution;

"9. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixtieth session the item entitled 'Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.'"

2. All necessary facilities were provided to the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. The Special Committee met in Geneva from 18 to 24 March 2005 during the sixty-first session of the Commission on Human Rights and attended the debate on the items of the agenda devoted to the issue of Palestine. The Special Committee met again in Geneva on 24 June 2005 before undertaking its annual field mission to Egypt, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic from 25 June to 9 July 2005. During its two sessions in Geneva, the Special Committee held consultations with relevant representatives of permanent missions, United Nations

agencies, intergovernmental organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, as well as non-governmental organizations. Owing to restrictions imposed on the length of reports to the General Assembly, the Special Committee did not submit periodic reports during the period under review.

3. Pursuant to paragraph 8 (d) of resolution 59/121, the activities described below were undertaken.

Department of Public Information

4. The Department of Public Information, in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 59/121, disseminated information on the work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories during the period covering August 2004 to July 2005, using various means of information dissemination at its disposal.

5. When the Special Committee undertook a field visit to Egypt in June 2005, the United Nations Information Centre in Cairo reached out to the media to publicize the visit. The Centre translated a press release on this mission and disseminated it to major Egyptian and Saudi newspapers as well as the news agencies based in Cairo. The Centre organized a press conference for the Special Committee on 29 June 2005. Twenty media representatives from major Egyptian and Arab newspapers attended. The Centre also arranged three exclusive interviews for Committee members with Egyptian newspapers. The mission's visit and activities were widely reported by the media.

6. The Meetings Coverage Section of the Department at Headquarters issued 14 press releases on the work of the Special Committee during the reporting period — 7 English and 7 French — including the Special Political and Decolonization (Fourth) Committee's consideration of the agenda item during the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly. The United Nations Information Service at Geneva issued a press release on 24 June 2005 containing a statement by the Special Committee.

7. The United Nations website maintained the web page on the question of Palestine under the Global Issues page, with links to other pages, including the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) database. From January to July 2005, the web page on the question of Palestine received a total of 73,755 hits and 7,106 page views.

8. The United Nations News Centre, including its Arabic language version, regularly reported on the work of the Special Committee on its widely read website.

9. The *UN Chronicle* covered the work of the Special Committee in Issue 1, 2005, under its regular coverage of the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly. Its E-Alert on the Fourth Committee included the coverage of the Committee's deliberations during the reporting period, as well as its deliberations in earlier years, including references to the Special Committee.

10. The Department, in cooperation with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, organized the International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East in Cairo on 13 and 14 June 2005, at which the human rights situation of the Palestinian people was elucidated, in particular during a panel discussion among journalists.

The Department held a two-week workshop for Arab journalists in November/December 2004, which included sessions on the question of Palestine.

11. A brochure entitled *The United Nations and the Question of Palestine* (DPI/2257/Rev.2) was updated in February 2005. It adds the developments surrounding the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Permanent Exhibit on Palestine at Headquarters (English) and at Geneva (French) was updated with the same content as the brochure.

12. A cultural exhibit entitled "Steadfast in Palestine" was organized at Headquarters in connection with the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The exhibit, depicting the artistic versatility and resilience of the Palestinian people, featured a collection of different artistic media, including paintings, sculptures, photographs and installations, brought together by the League of Palestinian Artists. The exhibit was on display in the General Assembly Visitors' Lobby and remained open to the public from 29 November to 13 December 2004.